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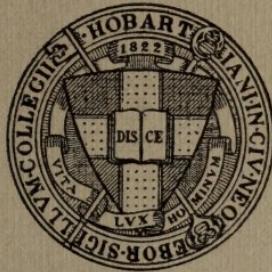
JULY, 1910

No. 4, Part 2

In Memoriam

Charles Cameron Clarke

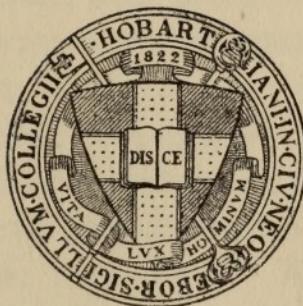
(Class of 1844)



A Sermon preached by
GUSTAV ARNOLD CARSTENSEN
(Class of 1873)
At the Memorial Service
All Saints Church
Briar Cliff Manor, N. Y.
June 5, 1910.

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In the death of Charles Cameron Clarke, Hobart College lost an honored Alumnus and the United States a high minded citizen. In evidence of the respect and esteem entertained for him by his Alma Mater the authorities of the College solicited and received permission to print the memorial sermon which was delivered on June 5, 1910, in All Saints Church, Briar Cliff Manor, N. Y., by another honored Alumnus of the Institution, the Reverend Gustav A. Carstensen of Riverdale, New York. We take too a profound satisfaction in distributing copies of this sermon among our Alumni, for it is not only a sincere and loving tribute to a noble man from one who enjoyed the privilege of his intimate friendship, but is also in and for itself to be commended to all Hobart men for the beauty alike of its diction and its thought.

LANGDON C. STEWARDSON,
President.

Clean Hands and a Pure Heart

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart."

PSALM xxiv, 3, 4.

The consecrated chest which contained the stone tablets, inscribed with the Divine law, had rested for seventy years, in the house of Abinadab. It was too sacred to be left without a more suitable habitation than the holiest of human dwellings; and long before the Kingdom was consolidated, David the shepherd whom God had anointed to royal honour had registered his solemn vow, "I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes or slumber to mine eyelids; until I find out a place for the Lord, a Tabernacle for the mighty one of Jacob." (Psalm cxxxii, 3-5). The time had now come when this vow could be fulfilled, for David had prepared a tabernacle on Mount Zion. The people form a procession led by singers and

players upon the psaltery and the harp, with the King himself at the head, dancing and rejoicing. Dean Stanley calls it the greatest day in David's life; and in this psalm we have the marching chorus which he had prepared for the occasion. It was sung antiphonally, and is a series of three sets of questions and answers. The second series or strophe begins with the words of the text. The ark, lifted upon the shoulders of Levites, and the people about it, have come to the foot of the hill and the ascent is about to begin. There is a halt and a pause. Then in a solo loud and clear rings out the question

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord
And who shall stand in His holy place?

The chorus responds with that “lofty definition of the man of God,” which it has been truly said “is worthy to be written in letters of gold, not only above the door of every church, but also on the walls of every capitol, and over the seat of every ruler, and upon the threshold of every mart of commerce, and within the home of every citizen.”

“Clean hands and a pure heart.” They are the words which fittingly describe the character of the man to whose memory we have assembled today to render the tribute of honor which is his due. Clean hands are those whose work is true and thorough; which are never soiled by unjust gain or by withholding what is justly another’s due; which are never lifted up but to praise God and to help the needy or to ward off evil and to smite iniquity. A pure heart is the inward source of outward righteousness. It means not the letter of the law which “killeth” but the spirit which “giveth life.” He who would have “clean hands” must raise the prayer of David: “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” (Psalm li, 10) for “out of it are the issues of life.” (Proverbs iv, 23). To show how fittingly this description of a righteous man applies to our departed friend, let us recall some of the leading incidents in his long and useful life on earth.

Charles Cameron Clarke was born at Canandaigua, N. Y., February 24th, 1823. He attended a private school at Geneva in

the same county and entered Hobart College in 1840, from which institution he was graduated four years later. His closest friends in college were Paul Fennimore Cooper, son of the novelist; Edward F. DeLancey, son of the Bishop of Western New York; and Alexander L. Chew, who was his room-mate for three years. Mr. Chew is, by a few months, Mr. Clarke's junior, and writes from Geneva, where he has always resided, that the boyhood friendship of nearly three score and ten years ago had waxed stronger with the lapse of time which brought with it an ever increasing admiration for his old friend's qualities of mind and heart. It is a remarkable fact that the oldest graduates of Hobart College now living, are two classmates of Mr. Clarke. After his graduation Mr. Clarke served, for a short time, as a clerk in a bank at Havana, N. Y. From Havana he went to Albany as deputy state treasurer, in which important position he was brought into close relations with Thurlow Weed, Wm. L. Marcy, Wm. H. Seward, Hamilton Fish, Millard Fill-

more, Silas Wright, "Prince" John Van Buren and others who rose to eminence in the state and nation. With Governor Seward and Mr. Weed, particularly, Mr. Clarke remained on intimate terms until their deaths, as he had continued their valued correspondent and confidant during that remarkable period of the history of our country. In 1854, Mr. Clarke became auditor of the old Hudson River Railroad Co., of which Edwin D. Morgan, afterwards governor of the state, was then president. Not long after this, Commodore Vanderbilt became president and then began an intimacy, both business and personal, between him and Mr. Clarke which was kept up with his son and grandsons for nearly sixty years.

About the year 1854, Mr. Clarke was made treasurer of the Hudson River Railroad Co. and then began the exercise of his remarkable abilities as a financier which soon made him a recognized power in the commercial world. At the time of the consolidation of the Hudson River, and New York Central railways, Mr. Clarke became treasurer of the new

organization. He continued as such until 1883 when he was elected a director and also vice-president; but he remained at the head of the financial department until his retirement in 1900; so that for nearly fifty years he shaped the policy and guided the development of one of the most stupendous business enterprises of our time. It is the testimony of Senator Depew that "a more capable, faithful and efficient officer no body of investors ever had in a corporation upon which they depended for income." And then the Senator adds, "As the head of a great department in which were a large number of employees he was noted for his discriminating kindness and appreciation for young men. He was a stern disciplinarian and had no patience for a breach of trust. He was always ready to assist in the promotion of honesty and merit. Most of the men in high and responsible positions in the treasury and auditing departments of the New York Central were marked in their youth for promotion by Mr. Clarke and had his constant and consistent help in arriving at their present positions."

President Thos. L. James, of the Lincoln National Bank, of which Mr. Clarke was a director until his death, says "He impressed me as a man who combined extraordinary executive ability with an unusual order of imagination. He was a man of the utmost personal integrity, living in the very midst of events which were developing the United States enormously and creating new wealth in colossal sums; yet he was content to do his duties, without any purpose of sharing pecuniarily in the opportunities and knowledge which were constantly at his hand. He belongs to the order of silent heroes—the men of great ability, of absolute purity and uprightness of character, of supreme modesty, who have made it possible for our great American leaders in business, finance and railways, to accomplish their marvelous achievements in the past fifty years."

A prominent banker once said that Mr. Clarke could probably raise more money on his own responsibility than any other railroad man of his time when he was treasurer and vice-president of the New

York Central. Moreover, this was at a time when capital was timid about investments in transportation enterprises because most men were not far sighted enough to recognize the possibilities of the country's development. The years of his service, especially the earlier ones, were a period of great anxiety and required men of indomitable courage as well as prudent conservatism, like Mr. Clarke, to inspire the confidence of investors. The wonder has been expressed that with his ability and connections as well as his conspicuous success in husbanding and multiplying the resources of a great corporation, Mr. Clarke never accumulated a great fortune for himself. The answer is two-fold. In the first place he never had what Virgil calls the "sacra fames auri"—the accursed thirst for gold. His tastes were of the simplest and his habits of the least pretentious nature. He had the keenest appreciation of the niceties of true refinement and real culture; but he abhorred the atmosphere of vulgar display and glaring pretence. He repudiated titles and badges

and uniforms and abominated the hollow conventionalities of foolish fads and fleeting fashions. In the second place if he had ever shared the weakness of many—(shall I say “most”?)—ambitious Americans for splurge and swagger, he would have overcome the weakness by his inflexible sense of honor. His position was one of trust; and in that fiduciary capacity his time, his energies and his opportunities were so completely devoted to the interests of those whom he served that self-exploitation or personal aggrandizement never entered into his plan of life.

I am not here today to play the “muck-raker”: but contrast the principle and policy of Charles Cameron Clarke with the purposes and methods of one of his contemporary financiers as set forth in “The Book of ‘Daniel Drew’”—that strange composite of church builder and railroad wrecker—whose name is perpetuated today in the annals of “Black Friday” and in the endowment of a theological seminary. The difference between the New York Central and the Erie of forty

years ago is the difference between Clarke and Drew—as far as the east is from the west; as unlike as day is to night. It is an example amounting to inspiration that Mr. Clarke lived and labored in a time of ethical obscuration without once soiling his hands with the tricks and jugglery of “frenzied finance.” The inventor of that phrase admits that he and his partners made forty-six million dollars by the promotion of a trust. No man or body of men ever earned that money; and money that is not earned unless it be the gift of love or honour, is stolen money. Over a wall in a certain prison there is this inscription, “The worst day in the life of a young man is the day he gets the idea that he can make a dollar without doing a dollar’s worth of work for it.” I would have that inscription not in prisons, but on the walls of our schools, as I would have a guide board at the beginning of a road rather than a gallows at the end of it. One former is worth a hundred reformers. There were times without number in Mr. Clarke’s career when he might have made himself a millionaire, by methods

which ordinary business ethics would never have condemned; but they were not his methods, because they were not right methods to a man

"Who reverenced his conscience as his King."

Was he over-scrupulous, Quixotic, "more nice than wise"? There are some who say so; there may be many more who think so. But

"In vain we call old notions fudge
And bend our conscience to our dealing;
The ten Commandments will not budge
And stealing will be always stealing."—*Lowell.*

Mr. Clarke never touched a dollar that was not as clean as the hand that touched it.

Most of us here today knew Mr. Clarke better as neighbor and friend than in the contact of business life; and it is in that relation that I am most inclined and best qualified to speak of him. As Senator Depew wrote to me last week, "To possess his friendship was an asset profoundly appreciated by those who were so fortunate." I realized that when the day after his death the veteran letter-carrier, Mr. Robert Turner, who has delivered

mail to the New York Central offices for more than forty years, met me and said, "Our dear old friend"—and his voice broke as his eyes moistened and he could say no more; but we clasped hands together and each knew what was in the heart of the other. So it was with all who knew him well.

We weep for Adonais; he is dead.

"The world has never held or lost a better man." It was in his home that his virtues shone the brightest. The four walls of that home were a section of Paradise reset upon earth. Within was a shrine where sacrifice of self was joy, obligations were opportunities and duties were benedictions. This side the passion of Him, Who was Divine there is nothing in earth or heaven so sacred as the hearthstone. That an angel's wing should cast the shadow of disruption to a home like that across the road, fills the beyond with a sigh and here we can only bear our helpless grief and try to be still and know that the Lord is God.

Mr. Clarke was fortunate in his ancestry. He had in him a liberal strain of

that Scotch blood which figured so largely in the formation of our free institutions and in after years produced such men as Richard Montgomery, Andrew Jackson, George B. McClellan and a brilliant host no less distinguished. In 1859 he was married to Miss Sarah McCutcheon, of the same proud ancestry, who passed into the higher life after thirty years of domestic happiness. She was wife, he was husband, but they never ceased to be lovers, confidants, friends. She was the watch-guard; he was the mainstay. The lines of bliss and the furrows of care across both brows were plowed by the same hand. The sun never shone on less than two.

Of a singularly modest and retiring disposition, Mr. Clarke nevertheless revealed to those who were blessed with his closer friendship a fine literary taste and discrimination which one seldom meets beyond the circle of professional scholars. He was well versed in all the standard English authors, and he never lost his love for the ancient classics. He was particularly fond of Horace and often

turned an ode of the old Roman poet to the enforcement of some ever living truth. He could quote Cicero also, with wonderful readiness, "to point a moral or adorn a tale." He had an exhaustless fund of anecdote as well as a rare faculty of observation; and it has been remarked by a competent critic that his vein of rich humour and his picturesque literary style which came out in his conversation would have enriched the annals of America if his portrayals and analyses of character had been preserved in permanent form.

We wonder how it was that Mr. Clarke touched life at so many points without identifying himself with the interests and engaging in the avocations which many men deem necessary to the enlargement of their circle of influence. He never joined any social club or military organization or secret order. He was not a diner out and he seldom attended the opera or the theatre. He never traveled beyond the limits of his own country, except, perhaps, for an occasional trip to Canada. He never displayed any fondness for athletics, and the only indoor

game that he enjoyed was whist, which he played with the solemn earnestness of Mrs. Battle, but never with any other purpose than recreation. His business, his home and his Church—these constituted the whole sphere of his activities and the thoroughness which characterized all of his relations in life is doubtless the result of this concentration of his interests and endeavours. A Christian who

"Bore without abuse

The grand old name of gentleman"

Earth is poorer and Paradise richer because he has passed from our sight to the Nearer Presence of his Lord.

But my friends, why these services and why this eulogy? They cannot reach him nor does he need them. Is it not for our own sakes, rather than for his, that we meet to thank God for his noble life? The deep stream of human life pours on—so constant, so imperceptible. As generation after generation disappears, the sullen roar of that broad tide where it pours itself down the distant and precipitous cataract into the dark valley of the shadow of death is so remote, so low,

we live as if we were immortal and would never die. Only when the dart comes home, striking with sudden clangor in the circle of our household or smiting down some lofty character intrenched in popular affection, are we startled into the consciousness of our mortality; and then—then, trembling and crouching we wait expectant till the mourning days are past and it strikes still nearer. Then fear and fright again. There is no flight from the universal presence. Only one refuge; only one help. Our departed friend, by the mute eloquence of his great example seems to say to us today, Prepare! Prepare!

It requires long years of studious application and wide experience to prepare the garment in which to appear before an earthly tribunal. The highest social life adorns itself with nicest care, puts on its costliest raiments when it comes to stand before earthly kings: but there is a tribunal, a court where none may enter unbidden and without preparation. Not the preparation of an hour or a week snatched in weakness and trembling

from long years of health and boastful strength, but that which comes from long communion with God, a willing submission to His judgments, the observance of His statutes and a faith which places all things in the hollow of His great hand. Such was the good and acceptable preparation of him whose loss we deplore. Such was the garment of his life. God rest his noble soul!

PRESS OF W. F. HUMPHREY, GENEVA, N. Y.